2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

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performance was delayed, the difficulty being the provision of a bull for the sacrifice. It was the duty of the district chief, Dienjok of the Golobogu clan, to provide the sacrifice, but as a certain man from the village of Buru owed him a bull he was endeavouring to obtain this and to kill it for the ceremony instead of taking one from his own herd. How long negotiations might have continued it is impossible to say, for Dienjok, though a chief, was old and feeble and seemed to have little authority in his district. After about a fortnight we announced our intention of leaving, but Aker begged us to remain, and expressed great regret that we should go before the ceremony. We naturally supposed this protest to be formal, and that the village was merely waiting for us to leave in order to perform the sacrifice; however we went with her to the village of Nyelwal where the chief and his assistant and a few old men were assembled. Here Aker harangued the men, frequently making marks on the ground and breaking off pieces of grass and laying them down one by one by way of emphasis and explanation. The conference lasted a long time and she begged us to have patience, seeming certain that she must gain her way. We cannot say how far she went into the matter of the debt from Buru, or if at any time she had any official voice in the affair, but she undoubtedly had the authority of the king behind her and she used it freely. Towards the end of the conference the men's [illegible] had changed completely. Aker announced to us that the ceremony would take place the next day and that Dienjok would provide the bull.

[634]

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At dawn next morning the drums were beaten for about half an hour. At 8 a.m. there were no signs of festivity in the village, and women, including Aker's servants, were still at work on the shrine enclosure, smoothing and plastering and removing the smallest weeds. Yet by 2 p.m. probably more than 500 people had assembled and dancing had begun. In the centre of the open spaces to the west of the shrine a large and a small drum were being beaten, the dancers surging in spirals round and away from these. Numbers of older men and women were sitting near the huts on the edge of the dancing-ground, and hundreds of spears were tilted against the thatches, for though all the men came to the village carrying their spears no one held one during the ceremony except Aker, who carried in her left hand a narrow pointed spear, in her right a whip with a double lash, and wore round her head a fringe of black goat-hair. Her cloth was knotted over the left shoulder in correct masculine style. She

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

the next morning they come near and enter the village. The people of the stones (those who brought the stones) come and turn to a certain village, and a cow is sacrificed; they go into the next village, and a cow is sacrificed (in each village which they pass, a cow is sacrificed). So they come to Fashoda. On arriving there, the great chief asks them: "Who has been elected by the flint stone?" They answer: "This or that prince" (calling the name of the elected one).

That is all, and then the chiefs are brought (are sent for); they all are brought, from Mwɔmɔ to Tungɔ (the chief from each district, from the extreme north [Mwɔmɔ] to the south end [Tungɔ] of the Shilluk country is sent for). And they all come, that is, all chiefs come, and they talk about the matter. Then the people go to the village (of the newly elected king), they surround his village all around; after that they pass the night in the bush. Early next morning they go into the village again. Their spears are taken from their hands. They go into the enclosure (where the new king lives). The women cry. The king remains in the hut. The chiefs, the descendants of the kings, are called, *they too go into the* enclosure. The door-stick (of the hut) is cut off with a spear. They rush into the hut, and take the prince (the new king) out. He gives them a cow, the cow is killed by the chiefs, and they eat the meat. Then they take the new king to Tabalɔ, and they adorn him with beads, with dancing beads of the king. And they hold a long palaver.

26. A second report on the Election of a King.

Jāk dwaí; ka ŋɛrɔ bɛ̈nɔ, ka gɛ ehɨkɔ, ka kwɔp kómì. Ka riɲ mák, dwaí fárì, ka kɛ̈l fān dugá, ka rɔ́á ɟɔk kɛ̈l, ka kiɲí gɔl Ńikań, gɔl dugá. Ka ŋɛrɔ lāmì, ka jwɔk ɪ̈ɪ̈m, ka Ńikaá ɪ̈ɪ̈m; riɲ de mɪ̀ɲì. Ka rūmí, ka pí lɛ́á rɛ yí ŋɛrɔ bɛ̈n, ka kiɲí kal, ka lwɔk yí bāńe riɲ. Ka e rūm, ka rɛ kiɲí lāu, lāne jāgɔ, ka tɛ́á jāgɔ ká wɛ̀kì, ka kɛ̈ɛ mal yach aɟùɟà-wish; kɛ̈ɛ mal, ka e rùà. Ru wɔu ŋɛr dwaí, ka tyɛ́ Ńielań ka gɛ dwaí Akurwear, fay Ńikaá. Ka gɛ bɛ̈n, gɛ kɛ̈la Ńikāńɔ kí Dāk, á gwɔ̀gì kí ekwɔu wudɔ gɛ gìr; gɛ twojɔ ryɛ àlɟɛ̀bà, gɛ kɛ̈l. Tɛ̈ŋɛ ko: Ńikāń a bi. Ka ɟɔk kɛ̈l, ka jal mɪ̈ɲɛ yɛ̈p, ka kɛ̈l, ka lāu lóá wòk, ka twɔ́ch, ka chíp feá kí yɔ. Ka ŋɛrɔ bɛ̈nɔ bɛ̈ne bɛ̈ne, riɲ ya dir, ka ŋɛrɔ kɛlá kwɔu jal gni, á dè kɛ̈ɲì. Ka rūmí, ka tyɛ́ Ńikaá bɛ̈nɔ, gɛ kɛ̈lɔ owɛ̈ŋɛ. ka ŋɛrɔ rɛ́á, riɲ e mɪ̈ɲɛ kí ńan a dāchɔ, gɛ rīnɔ kífa tyɛ́ Ńikaá, kífa gɛ w fwɔ̀t yí tyɛ́ Ńikaá, fwɔ̄tí ŋɛrɔ bɛ̈ne; ńān a gɟɔch, ká chíp wāí, ka ńāne tí gɟɔch ka chíp wāí. Ka riɲ chyɛ̈ɲ. Ka gɛ rɛ́ba wɛ̀t, ka ɟɛáń kɛ̈l, ka ɟɛáń chwɛ̈p, ka riɲ kɛ̈l wɔ̀k, ka ŋɛrɔ e bɛ̈nɔ bɛ̈ne bɛ̈ne bɛ̈ne, jāgɔ bɛ̈ne; ka chíp ɟɔk gɔl dugá, ka ŋɛrɔ làm. Ka chyɛ̈k: yí kɛ gɟɛ́k kí gí ràch! Yí ké nɔ̀k kí jɔ! Ńāch feá jāgɔ wɛ̀ɲ! Ka riɲ ɟwɔtɔ mal, ka ŋɛrɔ fɛ̈ka feá, rɛ bɛ̈ɟɛ bɛ̈nɔ̀; dɛ bāń riɲ ya

14: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

UPPER NILE PROVINCE.

THE SHILLUK PEACE CEREMONY.

628 This district had been disturbed by a feud for more than three years. The people of the district were tired of the continual guerilla warfare, and some of them were anxious to have the trouble finally settled, and to return to normal conditions. Each side was afraid to make the suggestion lest it appear to be weak.

628 634 643 [797] After an outbreak the mamur and the king or mek advised the chief men of the district to get together and make peace. The chief of the district came to the mission and asked to have their conference of the chief men here. Since the feud the chief of the district had been able to exercise his authority over one faction only. The Mainam, fraction, which included Mainam, Fakol and Fatwa, recognized him, but the people of Failo refused to accept him as chief. However the old men of Failo answered his call, and after several conferences both sides agreed that they desired to end the feud. They decided to inform the government and the king of their decision, and that peace, would be established, when it suited the government to send a representative with the king.

The king came to the mission as being neutral ground where both sides could come. He had two days to work before the arrival of the inspector. He needed only a few hours. The old men of both factions presented themselves before him. He said "You are the chief men. How is the talk?" They replied that it was finished. Akol, the chief of the district, then said it was his desire to rule the district well, but that he needed the help of the king, and the government to unite it. The king then dismissed the old men, and told them the talk was finished. He warned them to bring their fighting men to have the final ceremony as soon as the Inspector arrived.

628 634 [648] The Senior Inspector of the province, Mr. Jackson, arrived in the night. Chief Akol, heard the boat pass his village, and he was so anxious for the peace, that he ran to the mission to make sure it was the province boat. When he had found it was the boat belonging to the Inspector he ran back to call his men. He told the people he was

14: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

having the feud brought to a close, and warned them, that they would do well to support him. He also told them, that should any man seek to renew the feud he would find great trouble. The quiet of the night was broken by the kudu horn calling the men to assemble. 628 634

In the morning Akol came to inform the king that the men had arrived. The fighting men stopped at a respectful distance. Akol called the Mainam faction to come near. He was told to call the rest of his country, and he said 'it is my country' and he then called the Failo men, and they came near. The king greeted them, and then Akol proceeded to give them some advice. He informed them that the king had given an ox to be used in the peace conference. He told them that in the future they were to refrain from murder, on the road, in the fields, or wherever they might meet their neighbours. He added, "The person who will commit a murder will ruin his own house. If you have a disagreement bring a case before the king or the government. If busybodies from outside bring reports against your neighbours, do not let it estrange you again." [643]

The young men with their weapons then moved out into an open place where they could find plenty of room for the final ceremonies. The men of each faction were separate, and Mr. Jackson, and the king stood between them. A great crowd of spectators had gathered. Some of them were from other villages, and some were men who from some reason or other could not appear in the performance even though from the interested villages.

Akol threw some dust into the air near the animal. It signified that as chief of the district he held the land, and it was also to ensure that no accident would mar the ceremony. [781]

A time of speech making followed. The visiting chieftains made talks of exhortation in which they emphasized the sacredness of a conference sealed with the blood of a victim. The king made a talk in which he pointed out that in colour the animal to be killed had bits of both red and black. The red was for the blood that would be shed should some one break the covenant, and the black was for the evil of such a course. "We, the black people unite with the red (white) people of the government to reconcile you." He told them that Akol was to be chief, and that the other responsible men were to obey him. He informed the people that the animal was a cow of Nyikang, that it was a descendant of a cow owned by Nyikang and 537 628 643 776 [648]

17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

177 635 This change was the less drastic because by that time the division into Luak and Ger had already lost most of its practical significance. There was then already existing a tendency away from the old and highly centralised regime to one in which power was exercised locally by chiefs of confederacies, a tendency which began when the Turkish Government attempted, after deposing *Reth* Ajang, to govern the tribe without a *Reth* and through locally appointed chiefs and which has since developed as a concomitant of the inevitable disappearance of the *Reth's* arbitary powers. The change of the Luak-Ger boundary had the effect of turning the Chief of Debalo Kwom, who had hitherto been "Chief of Luak," into the chief of the southernmost confederacy of Ger (*i.e.* of the present "Fashoda Division"). He continued nevertheless as the titular Chief of Luak by virtue of being Chief of Debalo Kwom. Recently the chieftainship of Fashoda Division was removed from Debalo Kwom and assumed by the Chief of Lul. An interesting question now is whether the Chief of Fashoda Division or the now subordinate chief of Debalo Kwom is titular Chief of Luak. That this is uncertain is an indication of the emptiness of the title for all practical purposes. It may not be until the *Reth* dies that an answer can be given. Probably the ceremonial functions which appertained to the "Chief of Luak" will be performed by whoever is the chief of Debalo Kwom.

THE GROUPING OF SETTLEMENTS INTO CONFEDERACIES.

177 ● 637 [648] As has been said, the growth of territorial units larger than the settlement began with the Turkish experiment following the deposition of *Reth* Ajang. Use was doubtless then made, as has been made since, of the natural tendency of contiguous settlements to agglomerate, by reason of a common cause or of the existence of outstanding personality, into loose and impermanent confederacies, described by the term *luak*.[28] These confederacies have ever since been bolstered up to form the administrative units now called Divisions.

28. This word *Luak* has thus three meanings:
(1) a building for housing cattle.
(2) The southern province of the kingdom.
(3) An agglomeration of settlements.

17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

Thus of the present thirteen division chiefs only four hold traditional offices the others being government appointees over units based upon these rather vague confederacies. Though the four high chiefs do still possess an enhanced prestige their position is approximating rapidly to that of their less hallowed colleagues. This evolution to a more local form of government is a natural consequence of the inevitable lessening of the old autocratic power of the Rethship.

The impermanence of these confederacies is shown by a comparison between their composition in the Mahdia and their composition to-day (shown in Appendix IV), as also by the recent removal of the settlements of Mal and Abiangyei from Atodwoi Division to that of Detwok.

THE RETHSHIP.

The power of the *Reths* before Turkish interference was undoubtedly great. It was based partly on the semi-divinity with which tribal tradition clothes them and partly upon their great wealth in cattle and slaves. Justice was probably rough and large scale fighting more prevalent than litigation, such law suits as there were being seen, as previously mentioned, either by the settlement chief or by the *Reth* at Fashoda[29].

As well as wielding temporal power the *Reth* has always been the high priest of the tribal religion. Nyikang is mediator between God (*Juok*) and man, and each *Reth* is held to be a reincarnation of Nyikang. As high priest he has various obligations such as providing cattle for the sacred herds at Nyilual and Wau and providing a canoe for use at the shrine of Nyibodho (one of the Shilluk holy places).

Since the entry of the present Government the *Reth* has lost the means of acquiring wealth in cattle and is no longer allowed to have retainers of the traditional sort. He receives a substantial salary but this cannot purchase many cattle and his present comparative poverty has caused an inevitable decline in his temporal and spiritual prestige. The Rethship is living on its not inexhaustible store of divinity and the wonder is that the store has lasted so well.

29. The *Reth* is said to have had the enviable privilege of killing a tiresome litigant with a club.

17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

177 643 648 The *Reth* to-day is a convenient potentate the basis of whose power becomes more and more of an anachronism. In addition to being President of the "Central Shilluk Court," and as such hearing appeals from the twelve Division Courts, he is the mouthpiece of the Government in an ever increasing number of administrative functions and is invaluable in making peace in blood feuds and in dealing with all serious breaches of the peace. The tribe pays him elaborate outward respect, and continues to feel a genuine reverence for his office.

THE DIVISION CHIEFS.

177 ●634 It has already been explained that nine of the thirteen division chiefs are in a sense upstarts, being settlement chiefs exalted to an eminence which tradition does not justify, but that they are becoming progressively all to be regarded as having equal authority. They are appointed by the *Reth*, usually on the nomination of a council of the Settlement Chiefs concerned. The prospect of a monthly salary of £E. 2 and the anxiety of each settlement to provide the Division Chief makes the appointment a matter of considerable interest and rivalry. [648] [613] The Government's policy is generally to allow the chieftainship to remain with the lineage of the previous holder unless he was dismissed for misconduct and it is wished to penalise him and his line, or unless there are no suitable candidates from the holder's lineage, or unless his lineage has become so weak as to render impotent any chief appointed therefrom. On such occasions the chieftainship may change from settlement to settlement, as occurred recently in Fashoda Division. [613] [561] There is an unfortunate feeling implanted in the Shilluk that so long as a senior member of the family is alive it is improper that a junior member be appointed. A potentially able young chief will thus be rejected on the grounds of the existence of a doddering uncle. [648] Nevertheless the Shilluk are basically aware of the desirability of a strong chief and a veto by the Government, expressed beforehand, upon any candidate who is too old will probably be excepted as a wise dispensation from above, relieving them of the odium of passing over an elder member of the family.

17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

The present status and functions of the thirteen Division Chiefs are the same. Each one presides over the court of his Division, and is responsible for the due payment of taxes and for sundry administrative affairs such as the clearing of roads. They have become an essential link in the administration and the feeling of "division-consciousness" is growing and needs to be fostered. The future effectiveness of the *Reth* depends much upon the strengthening of their position as his local representatives.

The Settlement Chief.

The Settlement Chief is traditionally directly responsible to the *Reth*, since the four intervening high chiefs used to act more as his High Sheriffs than as local potentates. In addition to the execution of the *Reth's* orders the Settlement Chief has always had certain semi-religious obligations such as the building of a house or two houses at Fashoda or the maintaining of the local shrine of Nyikang. The settling of disputes within the settlement has always been his duty and the modern tendency for him to be judicially short-circuited in favour of the Division Chief should be avoided as much as possible. He can and should relieve the Division Chief of much of his work. He should attend meetings of the court at least whenever any party to a case is from his settlement. He is responsible primarily to the Division Chief for public security, taxes and road work.

The settlement chief is selected by the lineage heads of the settlement and invested by the *Reth* who himself knots the *lau* over his shoulder. Those of Tonga alone are invested by the Division Chief.

The Village Headman.

The status of the village headman (*jal dwong pac*) varies in accordance with whether he is the headman of the principal village of a lineage (*Pan dwong*), in which case he is not only a village headman but also the representative of his lineage within the settlement, or the headman of a subsidiary village in which case he is a village headman pure and simple, the senior member of a group of homesteads. Headmen of principal villages often receive a *lau*, in some cases from a *Reth* direct

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

Chapter VII

JUSTICE

692 648 643 681 A great part of the work of the king and his chiefs is the administration of justice. This is done under the supervision of the local British officials, and, of course, has been restricted in some ways. The former ruthless butchery and mutilation for petty offences is no longer tolerated, nor is the sentence of death and the execution of such a sentence permitted to them. Apart from this, however, it is the policy of the Sudan Government to encourage the various native peoples of the country to administer their own territory according to their age-long traditions and usages. And indeed, a harassed District or Assistant District Commissioner with only a handful of police to help him in administering an enormous area, being neither argus-eyed nor possessed of the power of being in several places at once, can attend personally only to a fraction of the cases that continually come up for attention. He will deal with the more serious criminal offences, but the majority of disputes and petty crimes among the Shilluk are heard and decided by the king and the district chiefs. 643 634 577

Whether justice as we understand it, the meting out to an individual exactly what is his due, is always done in these cases is another matter. To say, as is often said, that the African has a strong sense of justice and resents being treated unjustly, is not strictly true. He certainly resents being treated unjustly, but often he equally resents being treated justly when the judgment given is detrimental to himself. Hence, in a criminal case in which he is the accused, or in litigation with his neighbour, he will cheerfully swear to tell 'the truth, the whole truth,' meaning all the time 'and nothing like the truth.' Then he spins a most convincing tale which none of the listeners believes but cannot fail to 695 577

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

691 but he now makes it plain that he wouldn't have her as a
583 gift, and indeed has made overtures to another lady, so
422 please may he have his cattle and—just to make things a little more complicated—the calves that they have had, and can he have them at once since his new prospective father-in-law is getting a little nasty about the lack of dowry, and hinting that his daughter's affections may easily be bestowed elsewhere. 'Not quite so fast,' says number two, 'those cows are mine and mine only and quite obviously their calves are mine too, so kindly arrange for the immediate delivery of the same.' Father pours ridicule and scorn on both claimants to the calves. It is true, he admits, that both young men have some sort of a claim to cattle—which he will settle by and by when he gets a bid for his youngest daughter at present crawling round the floor—but for either of them to claim the calves is preposterous; surely they belong to him who has had all the trouble of herding the beasts; to his skill and industry in nursing the cows through the difficult time of calving is due the fact that there are any calves at all! And so the arguments and counter arguments, taunts, recriminations, insults and threats will be tossed back and forth. Tempers will rise and maybe sticks will be flourished and spears flashed. It can happen that one of the parties will work himself into a blind passion and regardless
[682] of the consequences may break his adversary's skull or thrust his spear into him, but generally, fear of reprisals from the clansmen of his opponent and the justice that will certainly be meted out to him by the white man in Malakal, should he survive long enough to be arrested, advises caution; and since none of the contestants is strong enough to take by force what he considers to be his by right, the dis-
• [634] pute is eventually, albeit reluctantly, brought up before the district chief.

695 Reluctantly, I say, because the litigants know full well
693 that whoever is going to lose by the decision of the court, the judge isn't. The plaintiff may marshal his facts with unassailable logic, clothe them in masterly oratory, and present them with crystal clear lucidity. He and his witnesses may even

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

occasional outbreaks of fighting. An incident which might have had serious consequences occurred in 1940, shortly after I had arrived at Detwok. The young bloods of Detwok, after a merry evening of drinking and dancing, thought to round off a perfect day with a raid on the ladies of Pabiu. All good fun and high spirits, but the men of Pabiu, not unnaturally, objected to their daughters and sisters being taken for a midnight stroll, and the father of one girl stabbed her aggressor in the throat. The attackers, suddenly sobered by this serious end to their pranks, retreated to their own village, carrying their wounded companion. The drum was sounded, the village roused and the men armed themselves for the raid that Pabiu might make on them for the insult offered to its womenfolk, or for the attack that they would most surely launch on Pabiu should the wounded man die. Fortunately tragedy was averted by the good sense of the chief of Detwok. Knowing that he would be unable to restrain his angry subordinates if the man did die, he sent a runner to the mission for medical assistance and another to Kodok for the police. Mother R. immediately went to Detwok and by prompt first aid saved the wounded warrior's life and the two villages a great amount of extra trouble and grief. The arrival of the police in the morning and the removal of the originators of the mischief restored peace, at least temporarily, to the neighbourhood.

Later the same year, the Assistant District Commissioner chanced to drop in at Detwok. His visit was most unfortunate from the village's point of view, for he found a couple of Sudanese witch doctors plying a brisk trade with, not merely the connivance, but the positive approval of the chief. He and the medicine men were promptly arrested and he was deposed from his chieftainship. He had been not merely chief of Detwok but the District chief, and now, to the chagrin of all true Detwokians, that coveted honour was transferred to Pabiu.

The year 1943 gave Detwok fresh cause for resentment and a fresh longing for revenge over their hated rivals. The rains had failed and the mid-year food shortage was even

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

776 God is considered as being far off, aloof from mankind, caring nothing for the things He has created. Men do not [782] then approach Him directly, nor, at least on great public occasions, presume to offer sacrifice to Him. Approach to God can only be made through the great mediator, Nyikang. It is Nyikang who, though he led his people into and left them in so sorry a plight, is reverenced as the Father and Saviour of the Shilluk people, is worshipped as a demi- [775] god, and is thought of as always dwelling among them in [782] the person of the reigning king. To him are all prayers made and sacrifices offered; in his honour sacred dances are [778] performed. His numerous shrines, located in different parts of the country in which his spirit is believed to dwell, are [793] carefully tended by the Bang Reth, to whom fall the perquisites of the meat of the sacrifices and the tributes of grain willingly surrendered from a meagre harvest in the sacred name of Nyikang.

776 The king, as the personification, as it were, of Nyikang 643 on earth, will offer the principal sacrifices on important 782 occasions during the year, for example, to obtain a plentiful [789] rainfall and a bumper harvest, for the averting of the plague [731] of weaver birds which descend on the country in their millions each year and devour the ripening grain, in times of drought and flood, of epidemic among the people and plague which is carrying off the cattle. On these and similar occasions is Nyikang invoked and sacrifice offered to him by • [634] the king himself and the district chiefs, and yet it is clearly understood by all that it is not Nyikang himself who will bestow the benefit or avert the disaster, but God, moved to clemency by the intercession of Nyikang for his people. And so the second and last article of the Shilluk Creed would run 'and in Nyikang, Son of God, Father of the Shilluk people, and our only intercessor with God for us'.

775 Alongside the cult of Nyikang, there is also a cult of the 769 dead. The Shilluk have only a vague notion of life after death in the Christian sense. They do, indeed, speak of the *Pa Jwok*, God's country, which is the abode of Nyikang and their ancestors, and which is reached only after months of

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

and that one of the tins containing ninety piastres (about 18*s*.) had been stolen. The District Chief was called and held solemn court on the verandah of the house. He, however, could not discover the thief and therefore gave judgment that the owner of the box was responsible for the safety of the money entrusted to him and that he was to refund the missing money and to be held in custody until he did so. This seemed rather unfair on Henry, the owner of the box, since he had gained nothing from acting as banker to the rest, yet unless the thief was found there was nothing that we could do about the matter and it seemed to be closed. Two days later we were surprised to learn that one of the boys had owned up to the theft and had refunded the money. We were pleased, too, because we thought that although the boy had acted meanly in stealing his companion's savings, at least he had been man enough to come forward to save Henry from having to pay the penalty for the theft. We were speedily disillusioned as to his motive for confessing; the other boys knew perfectly well that Henry was innocent of taking the money, and they had a very strong idea who had. Accordingly they subscribed to buy a sheep which was given to the local witch doctor as a fee for finding the thief. The jal yath let it be known that he would sacrifice the sheep at a certain hour, and the moment the animal died so would the culprit; the latter had not the courage to defy the curse but promptly confessed his guilt.

When an animal is slain in sacrifice, great importance is attached to the position in which it falls. If the animal is a bull, it is not usually slain outright, but wounded by a spear thrust and allowed free. If it should wander towards the river or towards the shrine before it dies, that is taken as a sign that the sacrifice is acceptable to Nyikang. So, too, is it taken as a good omen if the beast in collapsing falls on its left side; if it should fall on its right side then the portents are unfavourable, and should it fall neither to right nor left but simply crumple up and fall forward with forefeet doubled beneath it, that would presage some terrible disaster. The actual spearing of the victim is generally done by